

Middletown School Readiness Council
Wednesday, June 8, 2016
Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth St.
Middletown, CT 06457

Members Present: Betsy Morgan, Jessica Stewart, Sheila Daniels, Amy Waterman, Beverly Lawrence, Jen Cannata, Jerome Long, Jim Gaudreau, Wendy Berlind, Christine O'Grady, Susan Sienkiewicz, Marla Hinz, Donna Marino, Izzi Greenberg, Pat Charles and Lina Kronenberger.

I. Welcome & Call to Order: Betsy Morgan opened the meeting at 12:06P.M., welcoming everyone present. Introductions were made.

II. Acceptance of the May 18, 2016 School Readiness Council meeting minutes: Donna Marino moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Wendy Berlind seconded. The motion carried unanimously with thanks.

III. Financial Report: was distributed for the Council's review. Jessica noted all slots were filled for May and projected to be filled for June. She noted there was one additional non-resident in Bielefield's YMCA program. Under the School Readiness Grant funding, Jessica noted no news to date, she is hoping to hear by next week. News from the Office of Early Childhood - Gerry Rowal will retire Aug. 1st and Deb Flis is not sure of her position at this time. Discovery Funds: While we don't have Graustein funds, the cut from the State was 6%, and Early Literacy funds were left in place.

IV. Coordinator's Report: Jessica shared the MECN workshop overview, and the additional work from Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) group. Majority of participants in the PreK-K PDE were kindergarten teachers.

Yesterday Jessica received an e-mail regarding Care4Kids noting as of 7/1/16 they are reducing the qualifications from below 50% to below 30%. She shared statistics from our programs and added they could lose up to 15 families. Changes could result in huge increases in parent fees for some families., so programs will lose families and funding from C4K.

Link to sign onto petition will be sent later today by Jessica, the link to the webinar was sent to all Middletown programs. Izzi added Early Childhood Alliance and Parent Power are having town hall style meetings. She will let us know when the next meetings will occur. This got left out of the state budget. Either cut it off or limit enrollment as they are suggesting from 50 to 30%.

Post on the website for those 15 families especially to review. Intent of webinar helps providers tell families. Izzi noted communities have to address this because families will decide to just not work. Can we figure something out? Advocacy meeting on Friday at Wesleyan USDan Bldg. Rm.108 and anyone may attend to work on strategy. Izzi suggested local effort should come from the School Readiness Council. Betsy asked if there is any obvious forum beyond Providers Council; a brief discussion followed.

Early Childhood Information System data needs to be updated by the end of the month. This new system is like the old PKIS system. Izzi suggested an analysis of qualified children, do we have enough slots, can we shift kids? Where is the gap band we are missing? Income wise, how does our population missing those kids and families. Target that group perhaps, do we have the data sources? Might be cumbersome to arrive at the numbers; SR group and C4K group.

Jessica could take the 40 children that didn't attend preschool and look into the data for their financial info. Betsy asked if we should work to protect all children or just S.R. children? The Council concluded it is best to support all impacted by change. The question arose asking if there was any talk of meeting with congressional delegation? EC Alliance is working on this. Pat said superintendents have a rep. going to D.C. in the next 2 wks. and she can forward info. Jessica will get info on children up to school age.

Betsy noted getting stories or videos of those stories would be impactful. E.C. Alliance is suggesting communities put small videos up and #care4kids and #savecare4kids. Marla noted you can look at the website for an example. Videos should be sent to the Alliance or individuals can tweet them. Contact the Alliance if you need help. It's unclear where any relief can come before the next legislative session. Wondering if this will fall on local communities. We should get a fix on SR families and all city families to see the projected loss. Jessica will check with programs to find out how many children will be impacted by this change. The other piece is that this only applies when parents are up for re-determination which will happen at the date in which the family was determined. Re-determination in July will give 3 months to fall off or phase out. It isn't clear what that 3 month period will entail, it might not be 100% of children because of how they are re-determined. Families should apply prior to July 1st before eligibility changes. Marla said CRT is trying to push applications in now.

FRAC - Food Resource and Council Action, the reauthorization bill around childhood nutrition and community eligibility and verification rules. There is a petition against this and Izzi would like the SRC to sign on, noting the Coalition has done so. Pat noted at our next Board of Education meeting we will be voting on our cafe services. She further noted some districts are waiving participation, allowing them to serve other foods, but went on to say this works better for wealthy towns/cities. Izzi moved the Council sign on and Pat seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Jessica will sign the Council on and let the Council know.

Updates: Trauma and Brain Development videos 2 hrs each, impact of screen time on children Alicia Farrell was the presenter. Understanding the impact on trauma on brain development allows us to better understand behaviors in children. Izzi will post on website.

Donna noted iCare screens all children in their program and if we screen we have to be able to help children, that is the challenge.

Graustein has put out an RFP for equity work, Izzi will be submitting a letter of intent for Middletown. Izzi worked with the school grants coordinator for partnership rather than a competitive submission.

Betsy noted, through budget cuts, we lost Family School Connection. Donna said they will connect with Child First and hope to support 20 families. She added this is very sad and it will be difficult to transition families.

Early Head Start expansion timeline- has been delayed to July. As soon as it is posted, Alice will let people know.

Happy Summer to all!

Izzi thanked Jessica as she winds down her time in this position in Middletown. Lina concurred. Pat noted Jessica has agreed to support us until the next coordinator comes on.

V. Adjournment: moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:01, seconded and the motion carried. Betsy closed the meeting thanking those present for their attendance.

The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on
Wednesday, September 21, 2016
at
Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth St., Middletown, CT 06457
from
12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Sheila C. Daniels